



Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

February 19, 2010

Chicago Department of Public Health
Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

What is the risk?

As of February 19, 2010, the risk of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) influenza infection in Chicago is low. The numbers of severe influenza infections, influenza-like illnesses, and positive influenza tests remain minimal. Due to the possibility of a recurrence of heightened activity in the coming months, all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to protect themselves from infection by getting vaccinated with the pandemic influenza vaccine. Chicagoans should ask their healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccine availability. Dates and locations of City of Chicago pandemic vaccine clinics are available by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Three hospitalizations associated with pandemic influenza A (H1N1) have been reported in Chicago residents for surveillance week 6 (February 7 – 13, 2010) (figure 1).

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

With 17 Chicago hospitals reporting, 4.6% of emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (i.e. fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). Among seven outpatient clinics reporting for the week of February 7 – 13, 2010, 2.8% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness. This level of activity is similar to levels seen during the same surveillance week during previous influenza seasons (figure 2).

Which influenza strains are circulating?

For the week of February 7 – 13, 2010, with seven laboratories reporting, all 4 influenza A-positive specimens for which subtyping was performed were reported as confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1). No seasonal influenza A or influenza B strains were reported. Throughout the first six weeks of 2010, the weekly percentage of specimens tested that were positive for influenza has remained below 3%, compared to the maximum of 36% at the end of October 2009.

Where can I get more information?

[This month's edition of CDPH's CD Info newsletter](http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/CDInfoNewsletterFebruary.pdf)¹ provides supplemental information about the surveillance and investigation of the 2009 pandemic in Chicago. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)² report provides national updates and trends related to the intensity of influenza activity across the United States, as well as detailed information on antiviral resistance, severity of illness, and other topics. Updates specific to [Illinois](http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm)³ and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)⁴ are also available online.

Figure 1. Reported number of hospitalizations associated with confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1), Chicago, by week of specimen collection, April 2009—February 13, 2010

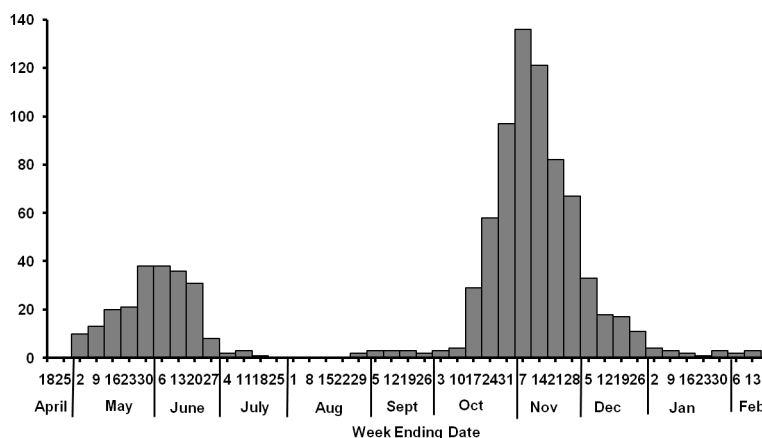
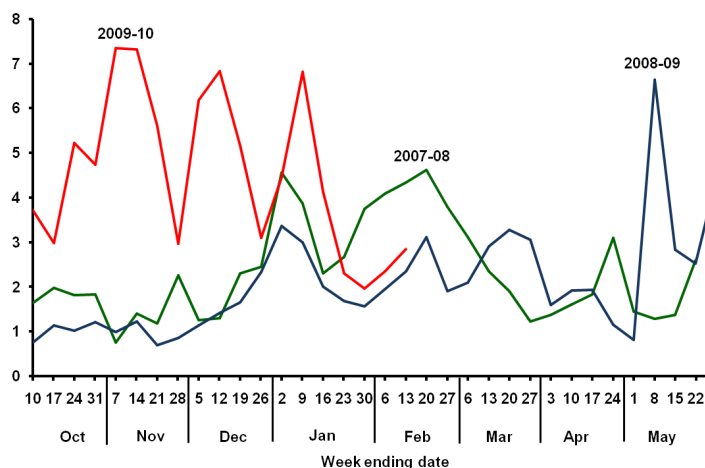


Figure 2. Percent of patient visits to enrolled doctor's offices attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2009-10) and previous two seasons, October-May



¹ http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/CDInfoNewsletterFebruary.pdf

² <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; ³ <http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm>; ⁴ http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation